



September 5, 2017

Children, Family, Health and Human Services Interim Committee  
65<sup>th</sup> Montana Legislature  
PO Box 201706  
Helena, MT 59602  
CC: Other interested Parties

Dear CFHHS Interim Committee,

In response to Senate Bill 261, Sunburst Community Service Foundation would like to request that the Interim Committee object to implementation of the designated cuts contained in that bill especially the DPHHS specified reductions. We believe that implementation of these cuts as proposed will result in severe fiscal ramifications to mental health providers and will cause irreparable harm to the most vulnerable of Montana's citizens.

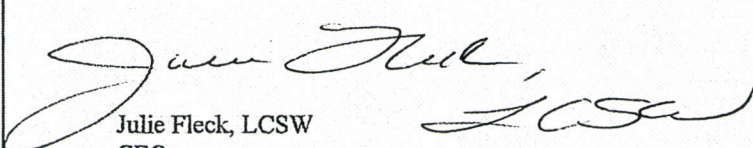
Sunburst Mental Health is a nonprofit mental health agency which serves individuals, children and families in Libby, Eureka, Kalispell, Polson, Salish Kootenai College, Saint Ignatius and Missoula. The proposed drastic slashes of 33% to Medicaid Reimbursement rates make providing essential services to our communities' most disenfranchised population near impossible with the very real possibility that we will be unable to continue to provide services in a majority of our locations.

We work extensively with state and tribal probation and parole, child protection teams, and various inpatient facilities as some of our key referral sources. Targeted Case Management has allowed Sunburst the capacity to complement the efforts of these referring groups by allowing for our team to help at risk individuals achieve goals and court recommendations in real and meaningful ways.

These Case Management services not only provide a healthy example of supportive relationships, access to community resources, improved independence and independent management of psychiatric symptoms, but also greatly reduce the need for Emergency Room and Urgent Care visits, as well as potential decreased incarceration for our mentally ill persons served and increased capacity for parental success within our CPS system.

SB 261 and the proposed cuts to services for the poor, mentally ill, neglected and/or abused children and other fragile community members is a gross injustice – particularly as there are no other programs in place to replace the services being targeted.

Sunburst Community Service Foundation recognizes how busy the members of this committee are at this time, and appreciate your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or for further dialogue.

  
Julie Fleck, LCSW  
CEO  
Sunburst Community Service Foundation  
jffleck@sunburstfoundation.org

Sunburst Community Service Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 703 • St. Ignatius, MT 59865 • (406) 745-3681

## Budget cuts

I am requesting no budget cuts for the people we serve because they deserve to have a good life. We help the developmentally disabled to do the best they can possibly do with our support.

To give them the support they need we need the money to support them, with transportation, caring for them, and sharing their talents with the community they live in.

I have worked in this field for almost 10 years and cutting their budget I see as a great disservice for them and for us.

Jane Botts



September 10, 2017

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to the funding cuts that have been made and those being considered to the budget of the Montana Health and Human Services.

There are few groups in populations served by health and human services that are more vulnerable than the developmentally disabled, who are in their situations, through no fault of their own.

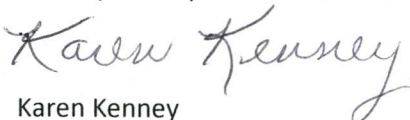
My son is thirty five years old and lives in a group home here in Billings, Montana. He is confined to a wheelchair and has poor vision. His life revolves around the people who live in the group home with him and the people who come in to take care of him. He will be in this kind of living situation for the rest of his life. Little things mean a lot to him....his favorite foods....his favorite tv shows...things like that. He has a limited number of things that he can look forward to. When cuts are made to human services budgets, he feels the brunt of it, yet doesn't understand why it is happening. Over time, as cuts are made, there is a slow but steady erosion to his quality of life....yet he is powerless to change anything that is happening.

This year the cuts are very large when you combine the first cut of over 3% and add on to that another possible 10% cut. In future years as the state coffers begin to fill up again, as they will, do you think that 10% cut will be put back in the budget? I don't.

The other issue that I worry about is the health and safety of my son. He depends on his direct care staff to provide his most personal and intimate needs on a daily basis. He forms a bond with the people who are helping him. He trusts them to take good care of him. When there are budget cuts and raises and employment benefits are non-existent, it is hard to keep good employees. When there is high turnover because direct care staff feel overworked and underpaid, my son is directly affected. He thinks he has done something wrong. He thinks that he is too much work and he wishes he could walk and see so that he would not be so much work.

Please do all you can to come up with solutions so that people like my son are helped and not hurt by your decisions.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Kenney". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Karen Kenney  
Billings, MT

September 11, 2017

Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee  
Helena, Montana

Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express concern regarding the proposed MAR cuts for Medicaid, specifically MAR Notice # 37-788 which includes a 3.47% reduction of Medicaid reimbursement across the board, and #37-801, involving 3.47% reduction in reimbursement for pediatric mental health services.

Our district relies on Medicaid reimbursement to help provide a variety of essential services to our students. The services include, but are not limited to speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, private duty nursing, personal care, orientation and mobility, psychological services, and specialized transportation.

If the proposed cuts go through, they will have a direct and devastating impact on our students. For example, we had a student on IEP who had severe autism. When I first met him, he could not be in the regular education classroom for most of the day due to physical and vocal outbursts and difficulty concentrating or completing work. We formed an involved team, including the resource teacher, occupational therapist, school counselor, behavior interventionist, speech therapist, parents, and classroom teachers. After coordinating care through the IEP and a behavior intervention plan, the student had support from a behavior interventionist who helped the student and the staff acclimate to the schedule and routines. After three months, the student was spending more than half the day in the classroom. A year and a half later, the student was spending most of the day in the classroom and making good friends. These services are possible due to programs such as Medicaid, and without them, this student and others like him would be lost in the system.

Please carefully consider the impacts that these proposed reductions will have on our district's students and students throughout the state who rely on these funds.

Respectfully,

Sean Magarg

Special Education Administrator  
Helena Public Schools

September 11, 2017

Dear Children Families Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Roxann Arnett. Please don't cut North Central Independent Living Services ,Inc.  
Please don't cut personal Assistance home care. I receive my hours from Easter Seals  
Please don't cut transportation and Aging Services where my Senior Companion works.

Roxann Arnett  
1623 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue North  
Great Falls, Montana 59401

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## O'Connell, Sue

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**From:** Colleen Forrester <colleen\_forrester@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 08, 2017 9:37 PM  
**To:** O'Connell, Sue  
**Subject:** Please Continue Objection to Proposed Rate Cuts

Colleen Forrester  
P.O. Box 412  
Glasgow, MT 59230

September 8, 2017

Dear Sue O'Connell,

I am submitting these public comments to ask that the Interim Committee on Children and Families vote to continue its objection to the proposed cuts to Medicaid provider reimbursement rates. In proposing these cuts, the Governor's office and DPHHS are going above and beyond legislative intent and placing an inordinate amount of these cuts squarely on the shoulders of Medicaid providers, and hence consumers, by slashing their rates by nearly 3.5 times higher than what SB 261 called for.

Medicaid services and providers are still trying to catch up after the budget cuts of 2003 and the level of cuts staring us in the face today will have a significantly negative impact on the people who rely on the services, setting funding for these critical programs back by over a decade. How long will it take these programs and the providers who provide them to recover from this level of cuts?

The cuts being proposed by the Governor's office and DPHHS will be particularly costly for Montanans with disabilities and older adults who have no other alternatives but to rely on Medicaid and other human service programs provided by DPHHS. The long-term services and supports we rely on are not available through Medicare or the private insurance market and paying for these services out-of-pocket is impossible for a vast majority of the population. Also, making these significant cuts to the programs, which facilitate Montanans with disabilities in older adults being able to live in their own homes and their own communities, would only end up costing the state more in the long run as we not only lose valuable federal dollars (CFC has a 6% enhanced match rate from the federal government) but many individuals could also be forced into a nursing home, the state hospital, MDC, or another institutionalized care setting where the cost of care is much higher.

Montana in many ways has led the country with self-directed services and the HCBS waiver program along with CFC. These programs are vital to helping people with disabilities, seniors and families with children remain in their own homes and stay actively involved in the community school, work, volunteerism, worship, and general participation in community activities along with everyone else.

It is my hope that by continuing your committee's objection to the way these proposed cuts are falling into place that it will force the Governor's office, DPHHS, and legislative leaders to do the right thing and come up with a different approach for balancing the state's budget. There is no justification for placing an un-equitable amount of these cuts on the providers who provide direct services to people with disabilities and older adults.

Sincerely,  
Colleen Forrester

## O'Connell, Sue

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**From:** Richard Williamson <screaminscott1@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 09, 2017 12:57 AM  
**To:** O'Connell, Sue  
**Subject:** Please Continue Objection to Proposed Rate Cuts

Richard Williamson  
136 Franklin St SW  
Ronan, MT 59864

September 9, 2017

Dear Sue O'Connell,

I am submitting these public comments to ask that the Interim Committee on Children and Families vote to continue its objection to the proposed cuts to Medicaid provider reimbursement rates. In proposing these cuts, the Governor's office and DPHHS are going above and beyond legislative intent and placing an inordinate amount of these cuts squarely on the shoulders of Medicaid providers, and hence consumers, by slashing their rates by nearly 3.5 times higher than what SB 261 called for.

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Sincerely,  
Richard Williamson